AMATEURADIO

News of the Amateur Radio
and Amateur Satellite Services

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Amateur Radio a 'Godsend' in the Aftermath of Tornado

Late spring and early summer storms are a way of life in the Midwest. High winds, hail and tornados are not uncommon, but killer tornados are. Such a tornado plowed a path right through the village of Barneveld, Wisconsin, early on the morning of June 8, 1984.

Barneveld was a community of about 600 people, located in the Southwestern Wisconsin county of Iowa. The tornado obliterated the entire business district and 90% of the homes and, in its fury, killed nine residents. One survivor described how he was sucked from his home by the tornado, and how he managed to hold onto a heavy object, watching telephone poles fly past the windows.

The tornado struck Barneveld, Black Earth and Mazomanie, just before 1 a.m. Amateur Radio operators on the Severe Weather Net near Baraboo had been watching the situation. Rob Hummel was in charge of the radio network. When the Net had indication that a disaster had occurred, the Dane County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Net, under the supervision of Frank Holliday, went into session immediately, when the American Red Cross requested communications assistance.

After a short briefing at the Red Cross office in Madison (just east of Iowa County), the radio amateurs, with Red Cross Disaster Survey Crews, headed to the stricken area. Steve Polishinski was the first amateur to arrive on the scene.

Polishinski, Joe Imilkowski, and Kevin Kolpitcke, spent the next ten or twelve hours with Red Cross personnel in the several areas which were hit.

Other amateurs offered their help, and, all told, 32 amateurs came forward to donate their time, their vehicles and their equipment to help people in trouble.

Red Cross personnel used ham radio to coordinate food preparation, medical supplies and dozens of vital details. Amateurs also coordinated incoming news media. (Many people remember seeing the "It's a girl" sign on the bulletin board in the Red Cross shelter. What a time to have a baby!)

The radio amateurs spent almost a week helping Red

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Amateur Radio — At Your Service

POTSDAM, NY — St. Lawrence County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members provided a free message service during the Lion's Club Racquette Valley Trade Fair.

The fully operational Amateur Radio station was owned and set up by Laird Chaffee, in his Focal Point photography booth. Hams who assisted in keeping the station active were James D. Constantine, "Doc" Nellis, Bill Papineau, Sr., Tom Ring and Lois Ierlan.

Contacts were made on phone (voice) and c.w. (Morse Code) and were logged from Michigan, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois as well as all over New York. Hams are permitted to contact other hams at any distance.

Messages (traffic) were sent for several of the Trade Fair visitors who took advantage of the service. The addressee does not have to be a ham. The National Traffic System, a network of ham radio stations, functions every day of the year and provides this service to the public free of charge.

When the message reaches its destination, the radio amateur delivers it to the addressee. Messages were sent to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Oklahoma and several places in New York state.

The ARES members also demonstrated Amateur Radio satellite communictions. The group was able to hear OSCAR (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio). OSCARs have all been "hitchhikers" on board rockets going into orbit.

(Excerpts from The Ogdensburg Journal. Used with permission.)

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members Lois Ierlan and Tom Ring, of Potsdam, New York provided a free message service to Trade Fair visitors. Messages were sent to eight states. Amateur satellite communications was also demonstrated.

(photo by Laird H. Chaffee)

Along League Lines Continued from page 4

been a tremendous increase in the number of television viewers served by cable — and a corresponding decrease in the number of viewers who rely on over-the-air reception. Should this dramatic shift not be reflected in any long-range spectrum planning?

- The main culprit in gobbling up radio spectrum is not the transmitted television signal — it's that the FCC continues to sanction inferior TV receiver design. The specifications for UHF television receivers date back a third of a century, to a time when it was a trick just to make a set work at those frequencies.
- The telecommunications needs of our mobile population are being met in a variety of new ways: cellular telephone service, digital paging and dispatching, and other techniques which are more spectrum-efficient than conventional land mobile techniques. Shouldn't these new techniques be encouraged and allowed to develop before more spectrum is turned over to land mobile use?

Just as there is room for disagreement on questions of land management — the use of our national forests, for example — so there is room for honest disagreement on spectrum management questions. But, at least let us be certain that the right questions are being asked!

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE? Contact Perry Williams, ARRL's Washington Area Coordinator, and arrange for a personal visit by calling (202) 296-9107.

Amateur Radio 'Godsend'

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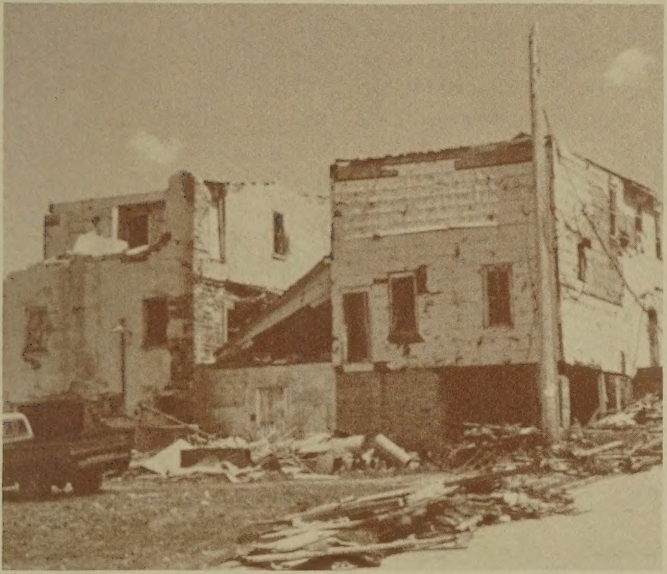
Cross with vital communications. Partial telephone service was restored on the fourth day, when the ham communications could be secured. It cost the taxpayers not a penny! The communications were conducted through an Amateur Radio repeater station — which are costly but, again, it cost the public nothing. (A repeater station is an automatic retransmission device, usually located atop tall buildings, towers or mountains. Repeaters enhance low-power portable and mobile radio communications.)

Two Red Cross officials describe ham radio participation in the emergency this way: "This has been a Godsend... Without these guys, we'd have been in bad shape."

—Jim Romelfanger, Public Information Officer,
Wisconsin Section

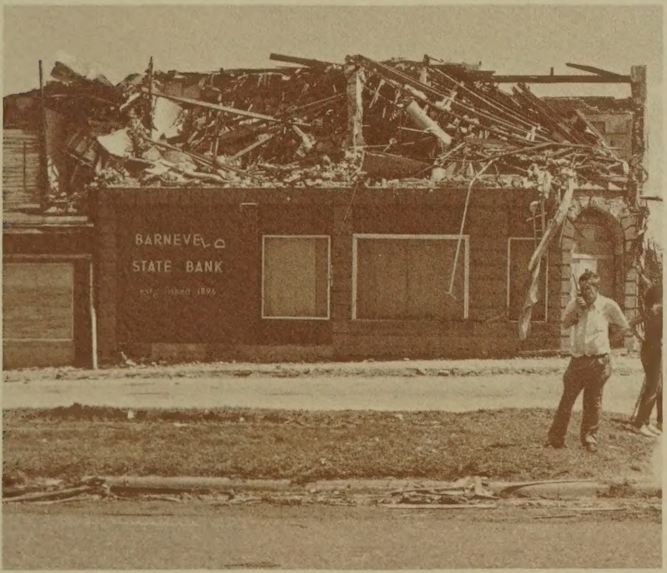


Ninety percent of Barneveld looked like this after a tornado struck Barneveld, Black Earth and Mazomanie, Wisconsin. Amateur Radio operators and many volunteers assisted with disaster relief efforts. These volunteers worked for many hours, and cost the public nothing.

(photo by Jim Romelfanger)

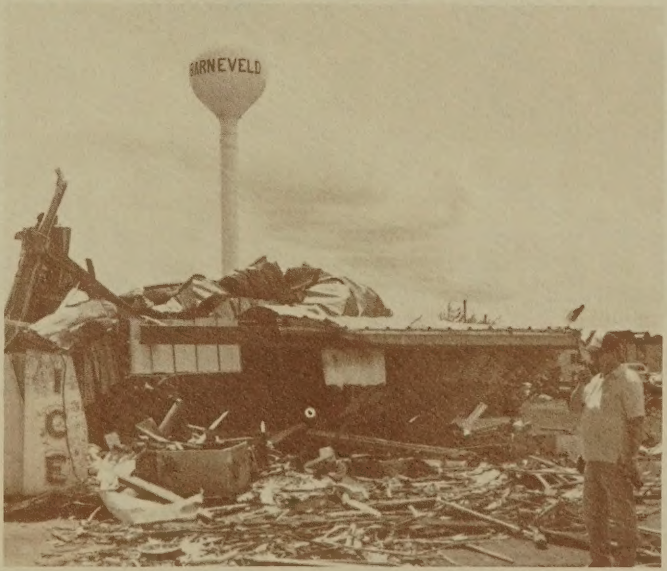
Jim Peterson taking notes as Susan Miller coordinates Red Cross operations in the aftermath of the Barneveld tornado.

(photo by Jim Romelfanger)



The Barneveld State Bank was just one of the buildings destroyed by the tornado. An unidentified ham radio operator makes an on-the-scene damage report to Red Cross headquarters in Madison.

(photo by Jim Peterson)



Jim Peterson reporting tornado damage via Amateur Radio. The water tower in the background survived the twister, but is slightly off vertical.

(photo by Jim Romelfanger)

ALONG LEAGUE LINES

The radio spectrum is a valuable and scarce resource. Seeing that it is put to the best possible use in the public interest is a responsibility of the Federal government. In the United States, the responsibility is shared by two agencies: the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The FCC looks after the interests of the nongovernment users (including state and local government agencies). The NTIA looks after the Federal government users.

Of course, the public interest is not static; it must be reexamined on a continuing basis, particularly in the face of rapid technological development. Frequency allocations which made sense in years past may be inefficient or unnecessary today. New uses for the radio spectrum are constantly being developed; their potential for public benefit must be weighed against their impact upon other radio service occupants. Decisions cannot be made solely on a technical basis; economics must be entered into the equation. Once a substantial investment has been made in equipment, its owners will resist change. To illustrate the point, to a surprising degree today's radio spectrum allocations reflect planning conducted during the Second World War! For this reason, an allocations decision based upon short-term benefits invariably will turn out to be wrong.

Land mobile interests in this country have drawn a bead on a section of the Amateur VHF band (220 MHz), in anticipation of government radiolocation operations being phased out by the end of the decade. FCC has taken no position on this last issue; the 220-MHz band must be discussed during joint NTIA/FCC long-range planning activities before any FCC action could be forthcoming.

- Some proponents of the land mobile service see 216-222 MHz as a good place to introduce Amplitude Compandored Sideband (ACSB) into everyday use. (ACSB is a technique that allows closer spacing of radio channels.) But if ACSB holds promise for the land mobile service, should the users of that service not be encouraged to adopt the technique by introducing it into **existing** bands, with suitable incentives for making the switch? How can a mode of communication touted for its spectrum-conserving characteristics be used to **justify** an **expansion** of the land-mobile allocations?
- Television broadcasting continues to occupy the lion's share of the radio frequency spectrum that is most suited to land mobile use. Yet, in recent years there has

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